



“Government... should ensure that citizens have easy access to IP education.”

Arriving at my desk this morning, one of the first things that caught my attention was a rather interesting piece from the Harvard Business Review (HBR). Always thought provoking, HBR asked a big question: ‘What should the US be doing to Protect Intellectual Property.’ The article’s answer was in large part as relevant to the UK as it is to the US. Top of its list was a simple statement “government... should ensure that citizens have easy access to IP education.”

In Britain today our businesses invest more – lots more – in the intangible assets that are often covered by IP rights than they do in things like buildings, or machinery or equipment. If businesses don’t understand what IP is and how to exploit it, or if the value of their investment in new ideas is leached away by illicit copying, then our economic roots are damaged. That’s why the IPO’s 5 Year Strategy, published in January, includes such a strong commitment to IP education to build both IP insight and IP respect.

We’re already doing a lot. IP Education is much more centre-stage in the IPO’s thinking than it used to be, with new offerings on our [IP for Business](#) web pages for adult learners – our entrepreneurs and creators – and, through the revamped [www.crackingideas.com](#) portal, for those still in formal education, including those at university. We will do more, but – and I’m conscious I’ve said it before – we need your help. Providing the ‘easy access’ that HBR talked about only takes us so far. We need to create a clamour for the eager use of the tools and teaching resources we provide. IP Connect readers – intelligent and charismatic as you are – are well placed to stimulate that demand.

I ask every one of you to talk to teachers, engage with the business people you know and their advisers and underline the need for an IP education revolution. Campaign, alongside the IPO. [Tell us what you do](#) and what reactions you get. We will all feel the benefits.

Rosa Wilkinson

Director of Innovation and Strategic Communications, IPO

Contents

Introduction

5 Year strategy

Education

- Think Kit

Designs

- Celebrating Design

Enforcement

- Cheetham Hill
- FACT

Policy and Law

- Unjustified threats
- Digital reform
- Court of Justice

IPO Blog

IP Equip

IP Events

5 Year strategy

Government vows to make UK best in Europe for innovation and IP

The UK's Intellectual Property Office (IPO) has launched an ambitious five year strategy setting out government plans to further bolster British innovation and the UK's booming creative sector.

The publication '[Making life better by supporting UK creativity and innovation](#)', highlights core areas of focus that will help boost economic growth and competitiveness via a world-class Intellectual Property (IP) regime. This includes:

- increasingly strong enforcement action against counterfeiters and other IP thieves;
- a dedicated programme of IP education for UK businesses and students;
- a commitment to joining and shaping an EU-wide patent system that will provide improved protection for UK business across Europe.

The strategy, led by Minister for Intellectual Property, Baroness Neville-Rolfe, recognises that despite the UK's strong IP regime, more must be done to ensure that businesses and individuals are capitalising on their creativity.

In response the IPO has been reaching out to the business community, putting on workshops and seminars explaining



the importance of protecting IP rights. In the past year nearly 31,000 business have attended these sessions with 91% reporting an increase in IP knowledge.

Even a modest increase in the registration, protection, and exploitation of IP would contribute to UK job creation and economic growth. For example firms that apply for trade marks are 7% more productive than those that do not.

The IPO's programme of education and its commitment to digitising and streamlining the application process for all registered rights, will work to address and overcome any accessibility issues.

The strategy also recognises the important role the UK will play in delivering the Prime Minister's vision for the EU Digital Single Market in which individuals and businesses can legitimately access online goods and services regardless of nationality and location.

Baroness Neville-Rolfe, Minister for Intellectual Property, said:

"This government is committed to making the UK the best place in Europe to innovate, patent new ideas and set up and expand a business. This strategy sets out why Intellectual Property is an essential enabler of productivity and growth.

The strategy outlines how the IPO will work to ensure that IP is accessible and understandable to all, that protection

for UK rights holders is strengthened overseas, that we positively influence IP regimes across Europe, and tackle online infringement.

The UK's intellectual property environment is making life better by supporting creativity and innovation. It is also helping to boost economic growth and competitiveness. I am proud that the UK is consistently ranked as one of the best IP regimes in the world."

To hear more thoughts from the minister you can watch the following interview https://youtu.be/-VvR5R1_mkk. You can hear what the IPO's Chief Executive John Alty had to say about the 5 year strategy by watching this short interview https://youtu.be/ID22_PyLSEA.

Education

IPO Education team to launch Think Kit

The IPO's education and campaigns team is to launch an online resource to help teachers include intellectual property in their lesson plans.

Think Kit comprises of three detailed hour-long lesson plans that will help teachers of GCSE and NQ Business Studies, Media Studies, PHSE or Music to get students, aged 14-16, thinking about IP and how they can protect and benefit from their ideas. It also uses enterprise scenarios to explore the commercial side of IP.

Think Kit will appear on <http://crackingideas.com/> from 10th February. It was developed as a result of extensive teacher research and discussions with stakeholders.



Designs

Celebrating Design

To celebrate the importance of design in the EU, the Office for Harmonization in the Internal Market (OHIM), the EU's largest intellectual property agency, launched the first edition of the DesignEuropa Awards last December.

Applications for entry to these exciting new awards are now open for entry through OHIM's website <https://oami.europa.eu/ohimportal/en/designeuropa>.

The awards are open to firms and/or individuals who hold a valid Registered Community Design (RCD). The RCD is a unitary intellectual property right administered by OHIM and valid throughout the EU.

The DesignEuropa awards will have three categories:

- Industry (firms with more than 50 employees and over €10 million turnover);



- Small and Emerging companies (firms with fewer than 50 employees and less than €10 million turnover, or companies established after January 1, 2013);
- A special Lifetime Achievement Award.

The inaugural award ceremony for the competition will be held in Milan in November 2016.

Enforcement

Counting the cost of counterfeit goods

Cheetham Hill, an area of Manchester where counterfeit goods are freely available, should be subject to significantly increased and coordinated enforcement action, the government has recommended.

A new report published by the UK Intellectual Property Office (IPO), has revealed the extent of widespread criminality in the area, and highlights some of successful seizures and prosecutions that the Government and its partners in law enforcement and industry have achieved in recent years. This includes the seizure of:

- One million counterfeit cigarettes and 70 kilos of fake tobacco with an estimated value of over £5million (2014);
- £1million pounds worth of counterfeit clothing, handbags and footwear (2013);
- Over £1/4 million pounds worth of fake vodka, along with bottling and labelling equipment (2010).

Despite frequent raids by Greater Manchester Police, Trading Standards and other partners, counterfeiters continue to flourish in the area. Recent investigations have uncovered a wide variety of designer brand fakes on sale price well below the retail price of the genuine items, from fake Louis Vuitton satchels and Beats headphones, to Nike and Ralph Lauren shirts.



To help tackle this ongoing threat, Minister for Intellectual Property, Baroness Neville-Rolfe has recommended that the IPO-funded Police Intellectual Property Crime Unit (PIPCU) should provide additional support to Greater Manchester Police.

Other recommendations include a more detailed examination of organised crime groups operating in the sale and supply of counterfeit goods.

Baroness Neville-Rolfe, Minister for Intellectual Property, said:

“Working together we have made a significant impact on IP crime across the UK however problem areas such as Cheetham Hill still exist. This trade, where income tax and consumers safety is simply ignored, undercuts and undermines legitimate businesses and allows other criminality to be funded and flourish.

“The production, distribution, and sale of counterfeit goods has always had close links to serious organised crime, a fact often not considered by the everyday bargain-hunting or cash-strapped consumer. Thanks to the ever increasing partnership between government departments, industry, and law enforcement we are leaving fewer and fewer places for criminals to hide.”

Enforcement

Movie Release Group sentenced to more than 17 years

Five members of an underground piracy group that wanted to be the first to release the latest blockbusters on the web have been jailed for more than 17 years.

The case, which marks the first time that 'release groups' have been prosecuted, follows an investigation led by the Federation Against Copyright Theft (FACT).

Over a number of years the group illegally released online more than 2,500 films including Argo, the Avengers and Skyfall.

The outreach of their criminality was vast. On just one website where the group shared their films there had been millions of downloads.

The majority of the leaked films were of reasonably high quality and were either currently showing at cinemas or awaiting release on video. The group often paid for illegal recording of films in cinemas, known as 'cams', and improved the quality through editing and encoding before releasing online.

Their criminal actions are estimated to have cost the industry many millions of pounds. During the sentencing hearing all five men accepted that they had caused total losses in excess of £5 million, each accepting a loss of more than £1 million.

Sahil Rafiq, Reece Baker, Graeme Reid, Ben Cooper and Scott Hemming, all pleaded guilty to conspiracy to defraud on 28th January 2015 and were sentenced to

imprisonment at Wolverhampton Crown Court (Thursday 17th December).

The five men were arrested at their homes on 1st February 2013 following an investigation by FACT with support from the police from West Midlands, Derbyshire, Hertfordshire and West Mercia, and the West Midlands Government Agency Intelligence Network (GAIN). Computer equipment and mobile phones as well as recording devices and recordable DVDs were all seized from the five properties.

When officers raided Baker's home he was in the process of encoding the film Gangster Squad which had only been released in cinemas three weeks before.

Baroness Neville-Rolfe, Minister for Intellectual Property said:

"The illegal copying and distribution of films has real consequences for the film industry and consumers. This sentencing shows how seriously the courts take this crime and the power of collaboration between industry, government and enforcement agencies."



Policy and Law

Unjustified threats on intellectual property rights

UK law provides a statutory right of redress against unjustified (or groundless) threats to sue for infringement of a patent, trade mark or design right (the threats provisions).

These provisions are thought to be unclear and have been accused of failing to achieve the necessary balance, which is to allow rights holders to protect highly valuable assets, but not to misuse threats of infringement to distort competition.

So the government asked the Law Commission to review the relevant law. Following a consultation and a response report, the Law Commission presented a final report and published a Draft Bill in autumn 2015.

The government published a discussion paper in October 2015. The paper gave an overview of the Law Commission work on this project. It then posed some questions to gauge opinion on whether the proposed reforms were necessary and appropriate.

The [government response](#) provides a summary of the key points raised by respondents to the discussion paper alongside the government's commentary on the issues raised. In light of the positive responses, the government is pleased to continue to support this area of reform and intends to continue to investigate introducing the reforms via the special procedure which exists for bills implementing uncontroversial Law Commission recommendations.

Call for views on cross-border portability of digital services

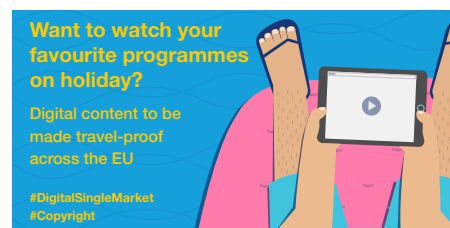
The European Commission has recently published [draft legislation](#) that is intended to ensure that all digital services are portable within the European Union.

This would mean that a person who lives in the UK, who subscribes to a digital content service there, would be able to continue to access that service when they are elsewhere in the EU.

This would be provided they have the right level of internet connection. The government is seeking views on the draft legislation to ensure that they deliver the best outcome for businesses and consumers.

We would welcome your views on the costs and benefits of these proposals and suggestions for how the language of the proposed regulation can be improved.

We would appreciate comments by 12 February 2016 to the following email address copyright.policy@ipo.gov.uk.



References to the Court of Justice of the European Union

The Intellectual Property Office (IPO) publishes information on cases that comes to its attention concerning intellectual property matters. We publish the specific questions that the Court of Justice (CJ) is being asked to answer and brief details, such as the parties to the case and relevant legislation.

We aim to publish information on new CJ cases as soon as we receive them. Although our target is a maximum of two days we often publish them within 24 hours. As soon as the website is updated we issue emails via our [CJ alert service](#) to those that have subscribed to this service.



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[IP Equip](#) contains 4 short modules and uses case studies to show why intellectual property is important.

Many of our customers complete IP Equip to learn about IP.

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